

Migration to U.S. tops death in Mexico

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MEXICO CITY --

Mexico has lost more people to migration to the United States than death since 2000, according to a government report released Thursday.

Mexico's demographics agency found that an average of 577,000 people migrated to the U.S. each year between 2000-2005, compared to 495,000 deaths a year in the same period. In 2006, 559,000 migrated and there were 501,000 deaths.

Mexico had 104.9 million residents as of last year, an increase of 6.4 million since 2000.

Immigration to the U.S. has increased drastically since 1970, when 800,000 Mexicans lived north of the border. Today, there are about 11 million Mexicans living in the U.S., both legally and illegally, the report found.

The study also showed more and more Mexicans traveling illegally to the United States.

In 1993-1997, 48 percent of Mexicans who traveled to the United States entered the country illegally. That percentage jumped to 68 percent between 1998-2001 and to 78 percent from 2001-2005, mostly because of stricter security measures tied to the Sept. 11 attacks.

Mexico has long pushed the United States to allow more Mexicans to work legally in the U.S. But the U.S. Congress has focused instead on strengthening border security.